Australian Bureau of Statistics

census

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www.abs.gov.au/census

census update

Seachange

Australian Social Trends examines "seachange" and other social issues

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100 years of STATISTICS

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census corner

2004 Census

Indigenous Test

by Keith Venton, ABS Queensland

As part of the testing program for the 2006 Census of Population and Housing an Indigenous Census Test was recently conducted at Wujal Wujal, a remote community in Northern Queensland. The ABS, represented by Keith Venton and Andrew Tyson, sought the assistance of the Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Council to help oversee the test.

The test involved a trial of two different Census forms and a number of procedures. Collector Interviewers from the Wujal Wujal Community Council worked particularly well to ensure complete coverage of the community, which has a population of approximately 400 living within the community and outstations.

"It was great to have the support of the Wujal Wujal Community Council, and the feedback we have received from the Collector Interviewers and the householders will be really valuable," said Keith.

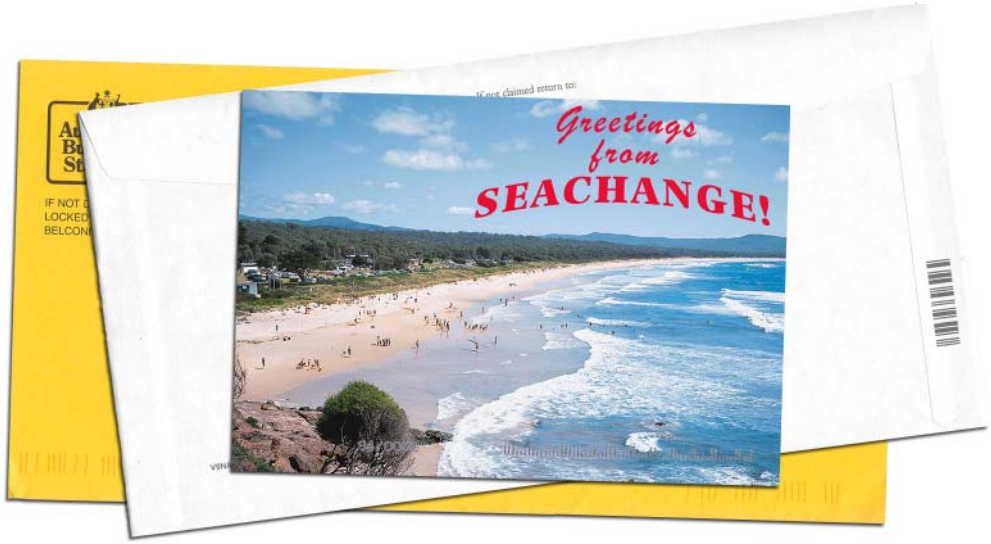
The results from this test, which also included two other communities in Qld and one in NT, will help with the design of forms and procedures for the 2006 Census.

Back row left to right: Andrew Tyson ABS, Bhan Pratap CEO Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Council (WWAC), Claudia Grogan Community Coordinator, Thea Grogan, Zeila Gordon, Talita Nandy, Shannon Duffin (centre middle) Collector Interviewers

Front row: Keith Rush Deputy Mayor WWAC, Coraleen Shipton Councillor WWAC, Desmond Tayley Mayor WWAC, Keith Venton ABS

Seachange

In recent years many researchers have identified an increasing tendency for people to move to coastal regions



Australian Social Trends is an annual publication that presents information on contemporary social issues and trends in Australian society. It draws on the wide range of statistics from the ABS, including census data, and data from other official sources.

Each year, Australian Social Trends provides a compendium of articles about topical social issues. The latest edition includes a number of articles that focus on the size and distribution of our population. One of these articles examines what has been called the "Seachange" phenomenon.

In recent years, researchers have identified an increasing tendency for people to move to coastal regions. The article uses census data to examine the characteristics of those who moved to a high growth coastal region in the year prior to the 2001 Census.

People move for many different reasons, including seeking a better climate, finding more affordable housing, looking for work, retiring from work, wanting a more pleasant environment, and wanting to be closer to family and friends.

The expansion of coastal development has implications for these communities, including increased pressure on existing infrastructure and the environment.

In contrast to the common perception that most people moving to coastal areas come from the capital cities, the largest proportion of new residents in high growth coastal areas were from other large population centres. New residents aged over 55 years, the ages associated with retirement, were most likely to have come from capital cities. However, older people retiring to the coast is not generally such a dominant source of coastal population growth as is often believed.

People who had recently moved to these high growth coastal areas had a much higher unemployment rate than longer term residents, probably reflecting the difficulty of finding work in a new area.

Employed new residents were more likely to work in the Accommodation, cafes and restaurants industry than current residents, perhaps reflecting their initial job seeking success in an industry where work is commonly casual and part time.

More information on "Seachange" and many other social issues can be found in Australian Social Trends (cat. no. 4102.0).

Did you know?

79% of people who moved to a high growth coastal region prior to the 2001 Census were aged less than 50 years.

Census test a success

A Major Census Test of 20,000 dwellings was recently held in parts of Melbourne and Beechworth, Victoria. The testing included both urban and rural areas to ensure all enumeration procedures were effectively tested. The test was instrumental in ensuring that procedures and processes work smoothly for the next Census in 2006.

Two types of Household forms and two different types of Collector Record Books were trialled, along with procedures for the enumeration of difficult areas.

Secure apartment buildings present particular enumeration problems due to the difficulty in gaining access. The people that live in these sorts of buildings are often busy and tend not to spend much time at home, making them difficult for collectors to come into contact with. In these situations, residents are strongly encouraged to either mailback their census form or complete it online.

The test also allowed the testing of a new system of text message notifications. The ABS plans to use text messages to inform collectors when a dwelling has returned their form electronically or when a mailback has been received for that dwelling. This means that collectors are saved a second trip to the dwelling to pick up a completed form.

Based on the results from the test, it is estimated that the field communications system will be required to automatically send over 1.4 million text messages to collectors in 2006.

There was an encouraging take-up rate for people completing their Census forms online. Based on the responses to the test, it is anticipated that there may be a national take-up rate of up to 15% for the eForm in the 2006 Census.

Major upgrades have also been made to the processing systems since the 2001 Census, but as the systems become more complex, integration has become a key issue. There are challenges with integrating eForm returns, mailbacks, and traditional paper forms retrieved by the collector, ensuring no-one is missed or counted twice.

The information gathered in the test is for evaluation purposes only and will not be published by the ABS.

Parts of Melbourne and Beechworth, Victoria were selected for the test to allow the ABS to trial new and improved collection procedures for both rural and urban areas.

2006 Census Output Strategy

The ABS is currently undertaking consultation with users about the strategy for the development and dissemination of 2006 Census products and services. The information paper ABS Views on Census Output Strategy (cat. no. 2009.0) outlines the proposed strategies and seeks readers views on them.

The next Census of Population and Housing, to be held on 8 August 2006, will be the largest peacetime operation ever undertaken in Australia. Despite advances in technology it still takes a relatively long time to process the millions of responses. It is expected the processing phase will begin in late August 2006 and last for approximately 12 months.

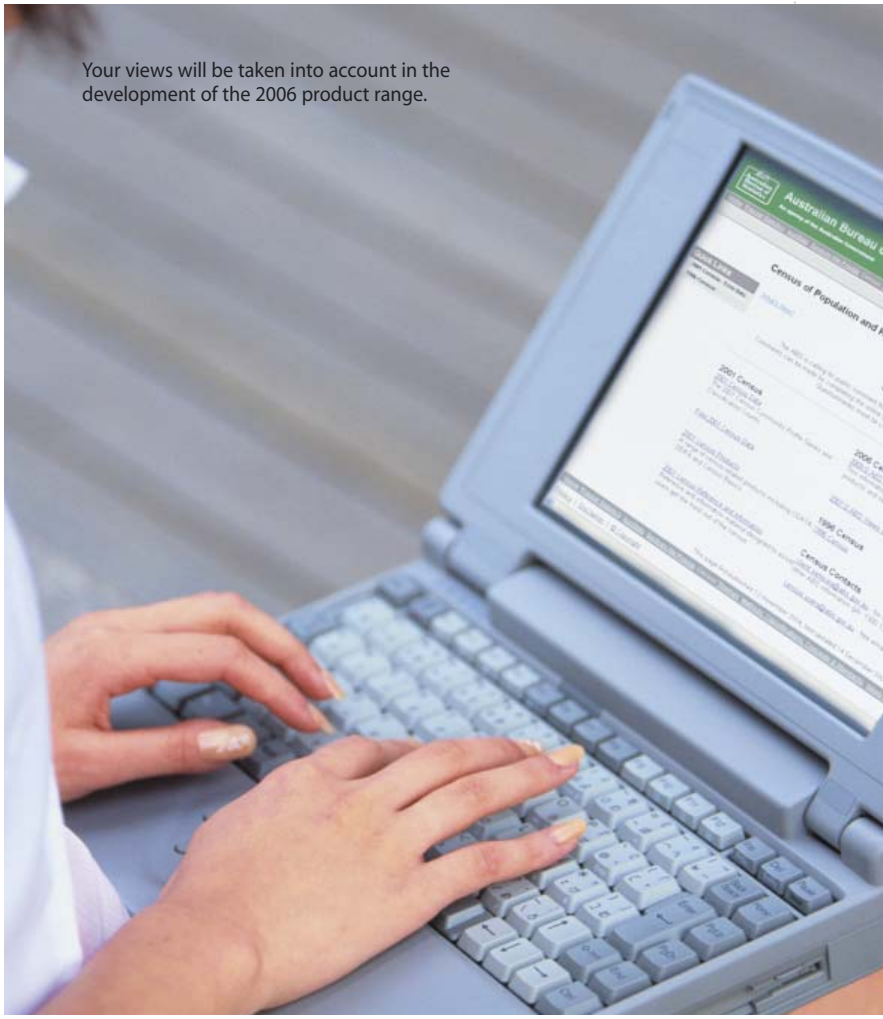
It is proposed that a range of new Internet products be developed to better cater for the varying levels of sophistication and experience amongst census data users. Novice users will be able to easily access basic data for their local area, while more experienced users will have greater flexibility in selecting and defining tables of data that better meet their needs. Many products will now only be available via the internet and will no longer be produced by the ABS on CD-ROM.

CDATA Quickbuild-style functionality will be delivered on the ABS web site, providing clients with basic mapping functionality. The ABS does not intend to develop a full GIS version of CDATA 2006. Instead, ABS licensed intermediaries will be responsible for meeting the demand for this type of product by marrying census data to a GIS engine and supplying it to users.

As such, intermediaries will be responsible for all development, marketing, sales and support for their software. As in 2001, clients can also choose to purchase a data only CD-ROM from the ABS and use it within their existing database or GIS systems.

It is also proposed that the range of printed publications be reduced to a single publication, containing data for each census topic accompanied by commentary, analysis, and where appropriate, thematic mapping of the data.

This proposal is a significant shift in direction for the delivery and content of CDATA and the ABS is keen to ensure the proposed strategy is the best response to user needs.



Your views will be taken into account in the development of the 2006 product range.

Homeless Enumeration

Homelessness is a growing concern within contemporary society. The reality of homelessness has evolved from the traditional stereotype of the derelict old man on a park bench into a diverse range of ages, backgrounds and demographics. Homeless people are part of our community and, as such, need to be included in the census count. The census count of homeless people is important for the formation of policy and allocation of resources.

The ABS has adopted a cultural definition of homelessness which divides homeless people into four categories: the Primary Homeless, the Secondary Homeless, the Tertiary Homeless, and the Marginally Housed.

The Primary Homeless category includes people without a conventional "roof" over their heads, such as homeless people living on the streets, in deserted buildings, in improvised dwellings, under bridges, in parks, etc.

The ABS has developed different procedures for counting these people due to factors such as low literacy and the transient nature of the population. In the lead up to the census, ABS staff in each state and territory identify areas where homeless people are likely to be found, and interviewers use a shortened version of the census form to record details from individuals. People who work with homeless people, and even homeless people themselves, are recruited and trained by the ABS to be interviewers.

The Secondary Homeless category includes people staying short term in boarding houses or moving between temporary forms of shelter, such as emergency accommodation, refuges or hostels. This group also includes "Couch Surfers", young people who are staying temporarily with friends and relatives.

The Tertiary Homeless category is composed of people who live in boarding houses on a longer term basis. Establishments such as boarding houses and emergency accommodation are identified by ABS staff in each state and territory prior to the census so that homeless people staying there can be included in the count.

Homeless people who are not staying in identified accommodation for the homeless, such as "Couch Surfers", also need to be identified as being part of the homeless population. For the 2006 Census, the ABS is trialling and evaluating different instructions and procedures to assist with this identification.

The Marginally Housed category of homelessness includes people in housing situations close to the minimum standard. While the subjective nature of this category means that it is not able to be defined operationally, Chamberlain and MacKenzie have conducted specific analysis to identify marginal residents of caravan parks from 2001 Census data in the Australian Census Analytic Program publication Counting the Homeless, 2001 (cat. no. 2050.0).

A range of organisations dealing with the homeless will be consulted about strategies, procedures and promotional activities to be used for counting the homeless in the 2006 Census. The ABS will also be considering the further development of strategies appropriate for counting the Indigenous homeless population.

More information on homeless enumeration procedures and their limitations can be found in the ACAP publication Counting the Homeless

Perspectives on Regional Australia

Winton Main Street, Winton, Queensland

Perspectives on Regional Australia is a new series of reports analysing issues with a particular focus on regional Australia. The first in the series, Women's Employment in Urban, Rural and Regional Australia, uses 2001 Census data to provide an insight into the different employment patterns for women across Australia.

Women in rural and regional Australia contribute substantially to regional economies through their participation in the labour force.

Structural changes in the Australian economy over the last few decades have allowed more women to enter the workforce or to combine work with family responsibilities. However employment opportunities for women in rural and regional areas may not be as good as for those in urban areas due to smaller and less diverse local economies.

The report finds that between 1991 and 2001, female participation in the labour force increased in each type of geographical region - major urban areas, medium townships, small townships, and rural areas.

Women in major urban areas are more likely to have higher educational qualifications and are less likely to be working part-time. Women in rural areas are more likely to be self-employed. Much of this can be attributed to women running the family farm, either as individuals or in a partnership.

More information can be found in Perspectives on Regional Australia: Women's Employment in Urban, Rural and Regional Australia, 2001 Census (cat. no. 1380.0.55.001).

Did you know?

Average weekly rent in Sydney increased 27.1% between 1996 and 2001

Putting faith...

...in the facts and figures

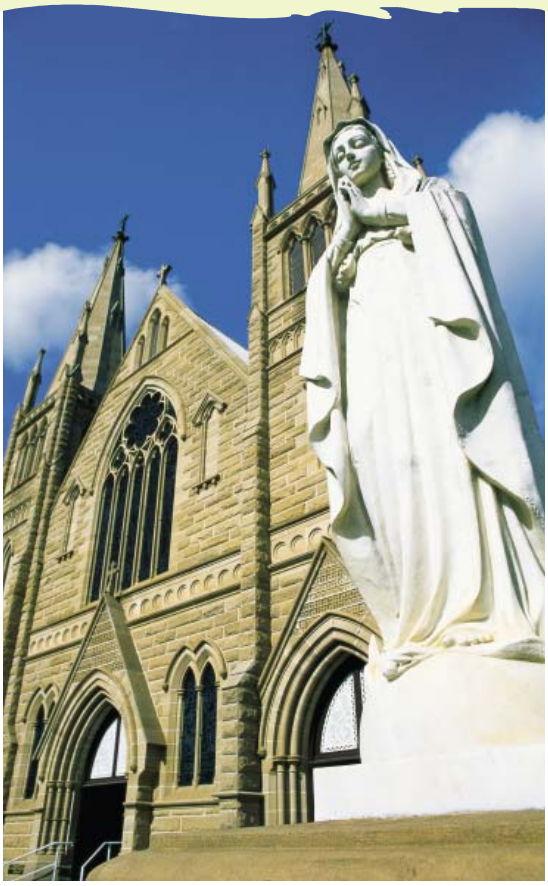
Reprinted with permission of the Townsville Bulletin

Every five years, Australia holds a Census. And every five years, the Australian Bishops, through their Melbourne-based Pastoral Projects Office, acquire a substantial amount of data from the Census.

Census data can tell us a good deal about the demographic characteristics of the Catholic population of Australia and how it differs from the rest of the Australian population in terms of things like age, educational levels, occupation, countries of origin and socioeconomic status.

According to Australia's most recent Census, which was carried out in 2001, the Diocese of Townsville had a Catholic population of 74,140, representing 29.4 per cent of the total population of just over a quarter of a million. There were 5090 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholics in the diocese, making Townsville the fifth largest diocese in terms indigenous Catholic population.

The largest numbers of Catholic immigrants have come to the diocese from Italy, the United Kingdom, the Philippines and New Zealand, with the last two countries by far the largest sources of Catholic immigrants in the 10 years from 1991 to 2001.



In 2001, the Diocese of Townsville had a Catholic population of 74,140, representing 29.4 per cent of the total population.

Census data helps keep track of how broad social changes affect the Catholic population, for example, with respect to the number of couples in de facto relationships or the proportion of Catholics marrying non-Catholics.

Census data is also an excellent planning tool and can help dioceses make decisions about such things as the location of new Catholic schools and aged-care facilities.

It also helps in determining what pastoral services are required to meet the needs of the Catholic people in the diocese, for example, through the provision of migrant chaplains for Catholic immigrants.

Most census data acquired by the Church is acquired at parish level, enabling a comprehensive demographic profile to be created for every parish in Australia.

Did you know?

On census day in 2001, over 78,000 Australians rode a bicycle to work.

The profile is an excellent tool for a parish to use in evaluating how well it is serving the local Catholic population and how well it is linking in to the wider community.

It can help in setting pastoral priorities by identifying, for example, that the parish has large numbers of Catholics living alone, or in one-parent families, or in low income households, or who do not speak English well.

Finally, it can also help dispel outdated misconceptions about the parish by showing that what might have been true once has now changed.

Census data can only be acquired for each parish if all the parish areas are defined in terms of the Australian Bureau of Statistics' basic building block, the census collection district.

A collection district is the area covered at the time of the Census by one census collector and usually amounts to about 200 households in cities and towns.

In each diocese, one person is responsible for ensuring that all the collection districts in the area covered by the diocese are allocated to the correct parish and in Townsville Diocese this is the task of the Diocesan Director of Parish Life and Ministry, Len Horner.

Since the Census does not ask any questions about one's beliefs or religious practices, census data tells us nothing about what Catholics believe or who goes to Mass.

For answers to those questions, other sources of information, including the 2001 National Church Life Survey (NCLS) are used.

The NCLS results for Townsville show that Catholics who attend Mass are much more likely to be older, female, university-educated and married or widowed than the Catholic population in general.

Census data is also an excellent planning tool and can help dioceses make decisions about such things as the location of new Catholic schools and aged-care facilities.

This article first appeared in the Townsville Bulletin, 19 August 2004.

Human capital

Human capital is an important concept in modern economics. However, measures of human capital are available for only a very few countries.

In the Australian System of National Accounts, measures of capital stock are currently confined to physical capital.

In order to fill this gap, the ABS has recently produced experimental measures of the stock of human capital for Australia. The analysis uses data from the 1981, 1986, 1991, 1996 and 2001 Censuses.

A person's human capital is defined as the total income they could be expected to generate in the labour market over their lifetime.

Projections about future income are made according to people's sex, age and educational attainment. The study then aggregates across all groups to estimate the total human capital stock for Australia.

As people age, their human capital changes. All things being equal, their human capital will decrease due to their remaining time in the labour force being shortened. However, as people spend longer in the workforce they gain skills and experience which increases their productive capacity and their income.

The study shows that there has been a significant increase in the stock of human capital over the 20 year period despite an ageing population.

The growth in human capital stock through the 1980s was mainly due to an increase in the total population rather than an increased rate of growth in a particular area.

In the 1990s however, the growth in human capital stock was driven by a large increase in the human capital stock of bachelor degree and higher degree holders. The study also shows that the value of human capital stock is much greater than that of physical capital.

Measuring human capital is particularly useful to policy makers and economic and social analysts. The differences in income streams from the different levels of educational attainment can also be useful for analysing returns from investment in education.

Comparison Between Human and Physical Capital (millions of current dollars)

	1981	1986	1991	1996	2001
Human Capital	$1,187	$2,125	$3,242	$4,291	$5,576
Physical Capital	$421	$751	$1,164	$1,373	$1,808

The ABS has recently produced experimental measures of the stock of human capital

Shake, RADL and roll

Census products such as CDATA and SEIFA contain a huge amount of data that can be manipulated and analysed. However, the most detailed statistical information available from the ABS is contained in Confidentialised Unit Record Files, or CURFs. CURFs are growing in popularity amongst researchers.

CURFs contain data from ABS collections in the form of unit records which have been made confidential by removing name and address information and restricting the level of detail available. They allow researchers to perform their own analysis and modelling on the data and produce their own output based on their individual research needs.

Among the most popular CURFs is the Household Sample File (HSF), a one per cent random sample of records from the Census of Population and Housing. Household Sample Files from every Census since 1981 are available.

Most of the classificatory detail from the 2001 Census is available on the HSF. However some fields, such as birthplace, industry, occupation and educational qualification are collapsed to less detailed levels in order to meet the ABS's stringent confidentiality requirements.

The Household Sample File is available on CD-ROM or through the Remote Access Data Laboratory (RADL). The CD-ROM version contains a Basic CURF. An Expanded CURF, with less restriction on the level of detail, is available through RADL.

The RADL is a secure on-line service that allows approved users to access Confidentialised Unit Record Files from their own desktops. Clients can submit queries using software such as SAS and SPSS. Restrictions on the nature of the queries that can be run ensure that the confidentiality of individual respondents is maintained. RADL includes a Discussion Forum to facilitate information exchange between users.

To support academic research and teaching, the ABS currently has an agreement in place with the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee to provide university staff and students with access to CURFs for non-commercial purposes.

The Remote Access Data Laboratory was launched in 2003.

A New Look for the Census webpages

As part of the improvements to the ABS web site, the census web pages have been redesigned to improve navigation and make information easier to find.

The census homepage – www.abs.gov.au/census – has been simplified, with some of the information on it being moved to lower level pages.

2001 Census Data

The Community Profile Series and Classification Counts are now accessible via the Census Data link. From there you can find information on the contents of each profile and download comprehensive information about the areas you are interested in.

2006 Census

Information on the proposed content of the next census in 2006 and the ABS's plans about how it will deliver the data once the 2006 Census is complete.

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2001 Census - Free Data
1996 Census
Have Your Say!
The ABS is calling for public comment from on the proposed 2006 Census Output Strategy.
Questionnaires must be completed by 15th December.
2001 Census
2001 Census Data
The 2001 Census Community Profile Series and Classification Counts.
Free 2001 Census Data
2001 Census Products
A range of census-related products including CDATA, SEIFA and Census Basics.
2001 Census Reference and Information
Reference and information material designed to assist users get the most out of the census.
2006 Census
2009.0 ABS Views on Census Output Strategy
This information paper describes the strategy for providing products and services from the 2006 Census.
2007.0 ABS Views on Content and Procedures
1996 Census
1996 Census
Census Contacts
client.services@abs.gov.au - for detailed census statistics or other ABS information (ph: 1300 135 070).
census.users@abs.gov.au - free email newsletter.
This page published 12 November 2004, last updated 14 December 2004

1996 Census

Links to the range of free data from the 1996 Census available online.

2001 Census Products

Information about the full range of census products, including CDATA and Add-On Datapacks, Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), Census Basics, the Australian Census Analytic Program, the Household Sample File, and more.

2001 Census Reference and Information

Your link to valuable reference material, metadata, and information about the census, including the Census Dictionary, the Census Guide, Making the Most of Your Census and answers to some Frequently Asked Questions.

Census Contacts

Email client.services@abs.gov.au for more information or to order customised tables. To sign up for regular updates, and information on products, services and releases email census.users@abs.gov.au with "Add to Census email" in the subject field.

Historical Digital Boundaries

Census digital boundaries facilitate the use of census data in Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The ABS encourages and supports the use of common boundaries by other organisations to improve the comparability and usefulness of statistics generally.

Historical Census Digital Boundaries (cat. no. 2925.0.30.001) is the latest in a series of census digital boundaries available on CD-ROM. It provides boundaries for Collection Districts (CDs) and CD-derived geographical areas for 1981, 1986, 1991 and 1996 in MapInfo interchange (mid/mif) format. As boundaries can change significantly over time, these historical digital boundaries are a valuable tool in any in-depth time series analysis of census data.

Digital Boundary Enquiries

Any enquiries about Digital Boundaries should be forwarded to the Assistant Director, Census Geography, telephone 02 6252 7214, fax 02 6252 8666, or email geography@abs.gov.au

Changes to ABS Pricing

New prices will come into effect for all ABS publications released after 1 January 2005. Price adjustments have been made in accordance with the latest Commonwealth Cost Recovery Guidelines.

The new pricing will see separate prices for publications delivered in hard copy and electronically. Reflecting the higher cost of providing publications in hard copy, the prices of electronic publications will now be significantly less than for the equivalent printed release.

From 1 January 2005, electronic publications will cost about 25% less than the printed equivalent

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census.users@abs.gov.au – to receive census information

Where to find the ABS in your State/Territory

NSW
5th Floor
St Andrews House
Sydney Square
Sydney NSW 2000

GPO Box 796
Sydney NSW 1041

WA
Level 15
Exchange Plaza
2 The Esplanade
Perth WA 6000

GPO Box K881
Perth WA 6001

NT
7th Floor
AANT Building
81 Smith St
Darwin NT 0800

GPO Box 3796
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Vic
Level 5
Commercial Union Tower
485 La Trobe St
Melbourne Vic 3000

GPO Box 2796Y
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SA
7th Floor
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ACT
Level 5
QBE Insurance Building
33-35 Ainslie Avenue
Canberra City ACT 2601

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Qld
18th Floor
313 Adelaide St
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GPO Box 9817
Brisbane QLD 4001

Tas.
Ground Floor
200 Collins St
Hobart Tas 7000

GPO Box 66A
Hobart TAS 7001

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Postal address
Locked Bag 10
Belconnen ACT 2616

Phone 1800 813 939
Fax 02 6252 8009

EDITORIAL TEAM
Kris Leggo
Myles Burleigh
Neil Tackage

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Richard Lynch and
Levitate Graphic Design, Canberra

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2001 Census Publications and Products Price List

Publications Available	Cat. No.	Cost $A	Qty	Total
Thematic Publications				
Population Characteristics, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians	4713.0	38.00		
Australia in Profile – A Regional Analysis	2032.0	48.00		
Population Growth and Distribution	2035.0	36.00		
Australia's Youth	2059.0	39.00		
Employment in Culture	6273.0	23.00		
Employment in Sport and Recreation	4148.0	22.00		
Australian Census Analytic Program (ACAP)				
Counting the Homeless	2050.0	30.00		
Indigenous Australians in the Contemporary Labour Market	2052.0	41.00		
Australia's Most Recent Immigrants	2053.0	46.00		
Australians' Ancestry: 2001	2054.0	34.00		
The Micro-Dynamics of Change in Australian Agriculture: 1976-2001	2055.0	35.00		
Australia Online: How Australians are Using Computers and the Internet	2056.0	34.00		
Selected Social and Housing Characteristics, Australia	**2015.0**	**37.00**		
New South Wales and Jervis Bay	2015.1	34.00		
Victoria	2015.2	34.00		
Queensland	2015.3	40.00		
South Australia	2015.4	30.00		
Western Australia, Cocos (Keeling) and Christmas Islands	2015.5	31.00		
Tasmania	2015.6	28.00		
Northern Territory	2015.7	28.00		
Australian Capital Territory	2015.8	28.00		
Selected Characteristics for Urban Centres and Localities, Australia	**2016.0**	**32.00**		
New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory	2016.1	37.00		
Victoria	2016.2	32.00		
Queensland	2016.3	32.00		
South Australia	2016.4	28.00		
Western Australia, Cocos (Keeling) and Christmas Islands	2016.5	28.00		
Tasmania	2016.6	27.00		
Northern Territory	2016.7	26.00		
Selected Education and Labour Force Characteristics, Australia	**2017.0**	**40.00**		
New South Wales and Jervis Bay	2017.1	37.00		
Victoria	2017.2	36.00		
Queensland	2017.3	44.00		
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Tasmania	2017.6	28.00		
Northern Territory	2017.7	29.00		
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Darwin and Palmerston	2030.7	55.00		
Canberra	2030.8	55.00		
Statistical Geography				
Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) Digital Boundaries, Australia on CD-ROM	1259.0.30.002	95.00		
Historic Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) Digital Boundary Files, Australia on CD-ROM	1261.0.30.001	95.00		
Historic Census Geographic Areas, Digital Boundaries, 1981-1996	2925.0.30.001	95.00		
2001 Reference Products				
Census Dictionary	2901.0	32.00		
Other ABS Products				
Measures of Australia's Progress	1370.0	45.00		
Australian Social Trends	4102.0	50.00		
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